

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in the July 28, 2004 Office Action based on the following remarks.

Pending Claims

Claims 1-18 are currently pending in the application. Of these claims, Claims 1, 10, and 15 are independent and the remaining claims, i.e., Claims 2-9, 11-14, and 16-18 are dependent claims.

Summary of Rejections

Claims 1-4, 6-7, 9-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Uchida et al.(U.S. Patent No. 5,640,253); and Claims 5, 8, 14, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Uchida et al.(U.S. Patent No. 5,640,253) in view of Matsunoshita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,512,915).

Turning to the specific claim language, independent Claim 1 is directed to an image processing apparatus comprising an input unit for inputting image information, a generating unit for generating output limitation information corresponding to the image information input by said input unit, a storing unit for storing the image information input by said input unit and the output limitation information generated by said generating unit, a reading unit for reading a document, wherein the document contains output limitation information, and an output unit for outputting the image information stored by said storing unit in accordance with reading of the output limitation information by said reading unit.

The present invention of independent Claim 1 describes an image processing apparatus for copying an original document while maintaining the security of

the document. According to the present invention, output limitation information is embedded into the image information of a document, where the output limitation information controls what, if any, part of the document can be copied.

According to the Office Action., Uchida et al discloses all the basic structure of Independent Claim 1, including “a reading unit for reading a document, wherein the document contains output limitation information.” Uchida et al is not seen to describe or disclose the present invention’s feature of reading a document wherein the document itself contains the output limitation information.

Uchida et al. provides an image processing apparatus comprising a means for inputting predetermined identification information, means for inputting attribute information for limiting outputting of image data, storage means for storing input image data, the identification information, and the attribute information in correspondence with each other, means for comparing newly input identification information with the identification information stored in the storage means, and data output means for controlling the outputting of the image data according to a comparison result and the attribute information. Per column 5, lines 59-66 through column 6, lines 1-4, after a color image on an original is read and converted into color image data, if desired by the user, a copying limitation signal is added to the color image data together with identification information data representing the owner of the image. The color image data added with the copying limitation attribute is stored together with the attribute associated with the copying limitation.

Nothing in Uchida et al. is seen to describe that the color image data contains the copying limitation attribute. Instead, per column 6, lines 14-24, when the

stored color image data of Uchida is to be outputted, in response to user input, “color image data **and the** attribute associated with the copy limit are read out from the storage device 103 (step S12) and are input to the image output discrimination circuit 104. The discrimination circuit 104 discriminates the attribute associated with the copy limit of the color image (step S13) to select one of image output modes...” As shown by this passage, the invention in Uchida et al the image data and the attribute associated with the copy limit are handled separately, and there is no discussion about the image data containing the attribute associated with the copy limit. Rather, the attribute associated with the copy limit is merely stored with, but separate from, the image data. Thus, Uchida et al. does not anticipate the feature of the document containing the output limitation information of Independent Claim 1. Accordingly, Independent Claim 1 is believed allowable.

Independent Claims 10 and 15 are the method and computer executable program equivalents of Independent Claim 1. Thus, Independent Claims 10 and 15 are believed allowable for the same reasons set forth in the discussion above.

The remaining claims depend from one of the independent claims, and thus, are also believed patentable for the same reasons as discussed above. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, individual consideration of each dependent claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached at (949) 932-3329. All correspondence should be directed to the below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sivon Kalminov", is written over a horizontal line.

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